An Inaugural Desertation

on

Onanism or Self abuse

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The diseases to which the re=
productive organs of both
sexes are liable must have
been in all ages a source
of continual anxiety, and un=
happiness to those whose
misfortune it was, to be af=
flicted with them. The most
prolific source of disease,
and misery from the abuse
of those organs is the
practice of Mastarbation,
or self-abuse to which ma=
ny of the youth of the pres=
ent day, are addicted.

This vice seemes to have
begun in an early age of
the world. Onan from
whome this practice de=
rived its name, practiced it

more than three thousand
years ago. Though we have
no authentic record of it, yet
doubtless it had been prac=
ticed long before that pe=
riod. To exhibit the sin=
fulness of the practice,
"the Lord slew Onan because
the thing that he did dis=
pleased Him". Sin and suf=
fering are essentially insep=
erable; its present immediate
consequences are visibly se=
vere, His rational and in=
telligent beings are respon=
sible for the use, or abuse
of those bodily powers
with which He has entru=
sted them, for the wisest
of purposes. The case of

Onan was one of presumptuous criminality, not ignorant frailty, but wilful impiety, and his said record is left in Holy writ as a fearful warning to all future generations.

Unfortunately for human nature its history declares that it is coeval with all forms of society, savage or civilized.

Self-pollution, or Onanism then is that detestable practice by which persons of either sex may defile their own bodies, while alone in secrecy, and while yielding to lascivious imaginations, endeavoring to imitate, and

procure to themselves those voluptuous sensations which nature has appended to the commerce of the sexes.

The effects which emenate from the practice of unnatural pollution to which the youth of all ages and countries are addicted, is enough to convince any observing mind that the great majority, perhaps, eight tenths of the cases of nervousness, mental imbecility, and derangement may be attributed to this vice alone. The influence of this disease upon both mind, and body are well attested. In the early stages

the strength begins to fail,
and the constitution seems
to be gradually giving away
under the constant drain
of its vital essence. The
patient feels neither very ill
nor, yet in a state of health
satisfactory to himself, he
knows not what to com=
plain of most. nor is his
bodily strength all that is
affected; his mind seemes
to be involved in the gen=
eral debility. He either is
extremely irritable, apprehen=
sive, morose, or suspicious; or
he becomes unhappy, mel=
ancholly, despondent, avoid=
ing all ports of social in=
tercourse. During the various

revolutions of the general sys=
tem, corresponding changes in
the general appearance, and
countenance gradually, but
steadily, unfold themselves;
the figure becomes altered,
the patient emaciated; the
weakness becomes evident in
the stoop; the pale sharpened
features; the haggard look;
but too clearly announce
the hidden mischief. Emacia=
tion does not occur in all
cases of seminal disease, in
some cases no external ap=
pearance would indicate
any very serious inroads
upon the health, the pati=
ent may have, a very heal=
thy, and florid looking coun=

tenance: he may be compar=
atively lively while in com=
pany, but he is conscious of
the hidden canker that is
gnawing at his heart strings:
he feels sensibly an im=
pairment of mind by loss
of memory: the flesh feels
bruised, there is stiffness
in the back, and joints
with great susceptibility
to the various changes of
the weather. There is not
perhaps in the whole cat=
alogue of disease a more
painful subject, for re=
flection, or more disagree=
ble for discussion, than
those miserable votaries
of solitary sensuality.

Horrible as these pictures are, they are but too true. We meet proof of it every day, as we walk the streets of the crowded city, or if we seek the cool salubrious country breathing every=where the perfume of love, we are surrounded by its victims.

In the country this vice is very prevalent. this is owing probably to the seductive influence of solitude, and vernal nature, upon the animal passions. How many of the young, and fair of the earth at a period when they should

be developing all their vig
or, do we daily meet sink=
ing into the grave with
no strong arm guided by
the beames of science to
snatch them from the
yawning tomb. men must
be offered up in hecatom=
bs at its shrine until Ho=
meopathy shall bare the
sway; by whose energies
the monster may be de=
stroyed, and humanity
rescued from the deg=
redation to which this
vice has reduced it.

An indulgence in this
horrid propensity also
begets a sensation very
near akin to actual aver=

sion to all the usual en=
joyments of life; and
so completely is the devoted
victim subdued by the
wretched infatuation, that
although sensible of the
rapid change which is
taking place in his sys=
tem he appears to have
lost the power of apply=
ing a corrective, to the mal=
ady, or of making the sli=
htest struggle to check
its destructive progress.

She is led away by his
passions which exercise
the most complete tyran=
ny over his reason, and
is virtually degraded to
the level of the irrational

part of creation. In fact
it is not at all an un=
frequent termination of
the tragedy, that the wre=
tched victim weary of life
which no longer seems
even with the hope of
future pleasures, and
wanting resolution to
refrain from his mal=
practice, and to strive by
penitence, and reformation
to restore his mind, and
body to something like
their original composure,
profanely raises his hand
against his own existence
and finishes his career
of offences by rushing
with awful temerity into

the presence of that Being whose precepts he has disobeyed, and whose vile purposes, in the object of his creation, he has most impiously and unpardonably thwarted.

The inclination to commit this vice increases with the frequency with which it is perpetrated; it is that kind of lust or appetite which grows with what it feeds on; and as soon as the infamous practice becomes established the soul unites with the body to court a repetition of the crime; all the faculties

of the body become the
ready spanderers to the
depraved disposition of
the mind; every object
of feemenine grace, and
attraction by a strange
perversion of legitimate
affect, as it passes thr=
ough the diseased organs
incites to this unnat=
ural propensity; so that
even the active desires
lusts, and inclination
with which nature
has endowed us, are
completely changed in=
to passions, and dispo=
sitions which brutify
the species, by tending
to gratifications equally

at war with nature
and reason. In strong
minds as the individu-
als have surpassed the
age of childhood, and
the empire of reason
has reached a certain
established strength,
their propensities have
doubtless been frequent-
ly checked, and subdued
before they have pro-
duced any of those dre-
adful consequences which
have been detailed: but
even in these cases
it is impossible to
ascertain the boundary
of the mischief which
may have been done to

the constitution. It is
in more advanced age
that this secret will be
developed, when the natu=
ral energies of the body
begin to decay. Yet not=
withstanding the enor=
mity of this offense
is so conspicuous to
the meanest capacity,
and notwithstanding
the records of the thou=
sands who down this
precipice have fallen
into destruction, the
universality of the prac=
tice is rendered every
day more clear. It is
by no means confined
to the unlearned, and

thoughtless part of soci-
ety; genius, and learning
are alike infected with
its influence, and the
most expanded capacity
of exalted rank and
the highest qualifications
of mind are no barriers
against this miserable
infection. One probable
cause of the fatal termi-
nation which too gen-
erally await upon these
excesses, is the secrecy,
which shame imposes
upon the lips of the
patient with respect
to the real cause of
this disorder; the victim
of his own imprudence

rather than admit of the
real source of his ail=
ments, he is perpetually
anxious to mislead his
medical advisers, who
are in consequence in=
duced to attribute the
variety of deplorable
symptoms which exhib=
it themselves in his
case to causes very re=
mote from those whi=
ch have actually produced
them. From the mis=
understanding which
here takes place an
improper mode of treat=
ment is naturally
adopted, while the dis=
order daily makes head

against the falsely directed attacts made upon it, and reaches a fatal hight of resolution sufficient to carry him through the shame of an avowel.

This dreadful disease assumes as many appearances as the chameleon. Now the poor sufferer is dying of consumption, then dyspepsia, Liver-complaint, disease of the heart, headache, dizziness, general indisposition, and a thousand other little things, of which no one knows, but the poor sufferer himself. Of all

other diseases it can prob=
ably do more to unman
a man, and make him
feel bashful, inferior,
mean, and contemptable,
It freezes the genial cur=
rent of the soul, unnerves
the energy, casts a shad=
ow over life, and turns
blessings to curses.
Beauty, love, and virtue
instead of being a delight
to a man in this unhap=
~~spy~~ condition, only serve
as monitors to remind
him of his awful situa=
tion, and that which sho=
ld give him the purest
enjoyment only gives
him pain; and when he

has almost ruined him=
self by swallowing del=
eterious drugs: tried every=
thing and every body as it
were, and finds himself
without money, and
worse off than ever, no
wonder that he feels as
though he could sit
down, and weep a rill
of tears. Thus unfitted
for life and enduring an
earthly hell look upon
this poor youth of im=
mortal hopes, his frail
body now a scene of
wreck and ruin, and
his mind tottering on
the verge of despair,
the miserable victim

of self-abuse, and say
whether he deserves the
attention of the medical
profession or not? If this
is not enough go to the
silent grave-yard, and the=
re when the stars keep
their night vigils over
the weeping willows
and whitened tombstones,
where are gathered into
an early and ignomin=
ious grave, hundreads
who have fallen victim
to the fell destroyer, and
there ask their spirits, hov=
ering forsooth over their
mortal urns, whether they had
ever deserved the attention, of
the medical profession or not=